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with Mr. Mathias

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I R E L A N D, &c.

BY LENIO.

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IRELAND.

THE SOURCE OF HER TROUBLES;

THE

POLICY REQUIRED.

BY LENIO.

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I R E L A N D.

THAT Ireland is sorely troubled, every one admits ; but respecting the cause of her disorders, all are not agreed. Whoever is Prime Minister of England, Ireland will be a thorn in his side, and, unavoidably, an object of his practical attention so long as she continues in her present state. If the people of England, therefore, would justly appreciate his measures, they should endeavour to ascertain the source of the evils that ask redress.

The Irish people are kind-hearted, but they are discontented ; they are intellectual, but they are ignorant ; they are industrious, but they are starving. The country is productive and beautiful ; but the rich abjure it and the poor disgrace it. Whence the discontent, the ignorance, the penury ? Whence the flight, or the perils of so many of its gentry, the turbulence and rage of so many of its peasantry ? Whence the necessity—as things are, the unavoidable necessity, of maintaining in it, at a vast expense, both of money and of morals, a large force of military and

police ? What government can heal the disorders that does not strike at their *root*, and how can the people of England judge if it do so, unless they know what the root is ? And how, if *they* remain unprepared to accredit, or repudiate the policy adopted, shall the ills of Ireland be remedied ? If the PEOPLE of *England* insist not upon *justice* being done to the sister country, is it *ever* likely to be done ? the history alike of human nature and of Ireland, answers, No !

But the people of England sincerely desire the well-being of Ireland, and not a few of Ireland's bitterest practical foes are her theoretical friends. They see and mourn over her calamities, but they mistake their source. It requires, then, only that the friends of Ireland understand the cause of her distresses, and the English government will be constrained, if it require constraint, to do her justice. It must either do so, in spite of the outcries that will assail it from fanaticism and self-interest, or give way to those whom the people will support.

It is the object of the present article to make apparent the chief cause of Ireland's deplorable condition and *thus* to suggest the policy required.

So long as history deposes, that unhappy country has been a land of strife and wretchedness. Hence it has been speciously affirmed, and too commonly believed, that her woes are irremediable, arising from the very nature of her people. It was an easy and convenient mode of accounting for them by her enemies, and plausible enough to de-

ceive the cold-hearted and the indolent who reckoned amongst her friends. The result has been, on the one hand, a recommendation of harsh government, and, on the other, concession of its necessity.

Let the actual condition of Ireland, however, throughout the whole period of her authentic history, be candidly considered. Has she ever been in circumstances under which popular contentment and prosperity could be reasonably looked for? Before the Reformation, her feudal state, a state, at best and anywhere, akin to anarchy, was scarcely broken in upon by civilization, until Henry VII. reduced the elements of confusion to comparative order, and sufficiently proved that Ireland was *capable* of being ruled, and *could* prosper and be tranquil as any other country *in proportion* as she was ruled wisely, that is, *justly*. But this was a late and a brief experiment. The Reformation was at hand, and from the period of that event to the Union, excepting a few brief episodes, she suffered under the double tyranny of civil and ecclesiastical oppression, so that to read her history, with the exceptions alluded to, during that interval, is to read a chronicle of blood.

And what were the exceptions? They were such as prove the rule—that the Irish are as susceptible of good government as any other people. Reference has been already made to the wise government of Henry VII., proving, amid all the barbarism and disorder that remained, that national peace and comfort might be certainly looked for in Ireland, as elsewhere, *in proportion* as laws were

equal and well administered. Then, did not Ireland enjoy a degree of quietude and prosperity under the administration of James I. it had never before experienced, and was not that administration, at the same time, more notable than any preceding one for its *equity*? “The great plan,” says Hume, “of James, in the administration of Ireland, continued by Charles, was, by *justice* and peace, to reconcile that turbulent people to the authority of laws, &c.” . . . “during a period of near forty years, the inveterate quarrels between the nations seemed, in a great measure, to be obliterated.” We proceed and find that, under the vigorous and sensible Ormond—referred to, in after times, with others of his family, as “the bulwarks of the Protestant cause”—in 1681, its revenue increased, and Protestants were safe, *although* “he gratified not vulgar prejudices by any persecutions of the Popish party.”

Setting aside these and some, perhaps, less important instances, Ireland was made the prey of spoilers, and her interests were uniformly sacrificed to private, and chiefly British, rapacity. While subjected to English rule, she was denied the benefit of English laws. And while ostensibly governed upon the principle of *equal* justice, she was forced, exactly reversing the case of England, to support a hierarchy disapproved by the bulk of her population.

But the Union took place, and her Parliament no longer existed to be the tool of intrigue, the manufactory of dead-weights, the forger of chains, and

the barrier to light. *Then* there wanted but *one* thing to be done, and the foundation of her peace, prosperity, and intelligence, would have been securely laid. It was to give her perfect religious freedom, that is, immunity from *legal obligation* to provide for herself means and teachers of religion. But not only was this full and perfect immunity denied; she was compelled to support a system which brought *no* means or teachers of religion to her, since her principles forbade connexion with it, and its own repulsive attitude, as a forced system, prevented all chance of conciliating her goodwill and overcoming her prejudices. The obligation to maintain the Protestant Establishment was a prolific source of strife and sorrows, when it was less evidently than it now is their main-spring. Since the Union, it has been, and still continues to be, the grand, if not the sole, cause of all the ills that cleave to her. If Ireland has not been, since that event, equally with England, prosperous and happy, “excepting in the matter of her God,” it has been because the English Parliament has not done its duty by her in relation to her secular affairs. In the matter of religion alone has England been prevented by any insurmountable difficulty from regarding the golden rule with respect to Ireland, and treating her as herself. And the difficulty that has actually existed in reference to religion has been, and is, *insurmountable* only because it has been, and is assumed to be, an *unalterable* position that, come what will, Protestantism in Ireland *must* have a legislative provision for its support, and that this

provision the Irish people themselves must make. What then remains to do but to relieve Ireland *altogether*, as soon as may be, from the *compulsory* support of her undesired hierarchy? Let this be done, and it will be seen that her people are neither incapable of rule, nor unsusceptible of improvement.

But be it ever understood, it is not the destruction of the *Protestant Church* established in Ireland that is pleaded for, but of the *establishment* of the Protestant Church there — the reduction of the episcopal church to dependence on its own resources, the resources of which it is actual proprietor, or which it possesses, at the command of its own piety, talent, and diligence, in the voluntary contributions of its friends.

Before the abolition of slavery, the colonists said the disease of the West Indies was negroism—it was the wicked, idle, incorrigible character of the Negroes that rendered despotism necessary, and made it the only security for peace, the only preservative against insurrection, the only incentive to industry. But the abolitionists replied, No! even admitting that the negro character is very bad, the natural idleness and malice of the negroes are warmed into social evils by *the system* under which they groan. Let *slavery* be abolished, and they will be less idle, and sullen, and revengeful. The experiment was ventured upon, and who now sincerely challenges its wisdom? It is in a similar spirit of misjudgment with that of the colonists and their friends, that many politicians refer to Ireland.

But let her peasantry and her working classes generally, (for, of course, the question is only about these,) let them be noted under any circumstances in which it is in human nature not to repine, and where are there any in the world more industrious, or more easily contented?

But in proof that the Irish are a naturally ungrateful and unreasonably disaffected people, it has been said, ‘Look at them immediately after experiencing any legislative act of conciliation, and you will find such act to have operated as a signal for new outrages against law and order. So incorrigible are they, that to give them liberty is to invoke licentiousness, and the only way of making them prosper, is to coerce them into quietude.’ Then statistics are cited to shew how, when under coercive laws, they multiplied and improved and grew rich; and as soon as the strong arm of force relaxed, industry declined, and rapine awoke. But what may be the real case, even admitting these relations? Not by any means, necessarily, that the Irish are either ungrateful or unreasonably disaffected; but that, being bound down, like Swift’s hero, when one cord after another is loosened, they naturally employ their enlarged freedom to *perfect* their escape from bondage. And what wonder if they thrive most when most in thralldom? Their ineffectual struggles would of course exhaust the vigour that, without them, would have circulated through the social frame. But what of this, unless it followed that if they were *entirely* free, they would *then* also waste their

strength? What *is* bondage but liberty in throes? Nature, restrained, *will* agonize, and her efforts *must* continue, unless force repress them, or their end be answered. Is nature, therefore, that only seeks to assert for herself sweet liberty, and satisfy her given instincts, wrong? Are not they wrong, rather, who would repress her energies, save when she becomes aggressive, or gives signs of *unaccountable* and *fatuous* rage against herself? Does Ireland so? Does she rage, and no one know for what?

There have been, however, in perhaps all the cases that would be adduced as proofs of Ireland's ingratitude, not only the remanents of bondage to vex, but new causes of provocation, as in the massacre of 1641, so soon after the applauded legislation of James. Was not that event evidently advanced by real or imagined ecclesiastical injuries?

Some would lay the fault of Ireland's troubles upon her great men, and Protestant clergy, as though they were actuated, more than other men, by the spirit of selfishness; careless so that they may secure to themselves the means of secluded indulgence at home, or of more magnificent retirement from domestic disagreeables abroad. But her great men, abused as they have been, comprise many of the most generous and disinterested of mankind; and her clergy, assailed as they also have been, may compare, as a body, in character, talent, and benevolence, with any other class in the kingdom. It is not their rapacity that curses Ireland; *they* are

guiltless: it is THE SYSTEM of which they are, in most cases, the honourable and well-intending agents. Those persons render themselves justly liable to the charge of senseless bigotry who declaim against the clergy, and do not see that, as a body, they are only what their circumstances make them. However benevolent and unassuming, they are, in a degree not experienced by the Established Clergy of any other land, under the disadvantage that must always attend the instructor who teaches by authority. The Emperor Adrian *might* have discussed the point of grammar fairly, but the prudence of debating with the head of fifty legions was not at all unnaturally questioned. It is altogether unnecessary to look for the *source* of Ireland's distractions in the character of the people generally, or in the conduct of her great men, or Protestant clergy in particular.

Neither is it necessary to seek it in her religion. Admitting that Roman Catholicism is error, and, consequently, that Ireland is *diseased* with it, as many politicians, Whigs, Tories, Churchmen, and Dissenters, affirm, as though she must *therefore* necessarily be distracted, it is *not* with her disease that she is mad, and, apparently, incurable, but from the treatment of her doctors. She is frensied, not with disease, but OPPRESSION. The south of Ireland is frensied most: the north least. Why? Not *because* the Roman Catholics are in greater numbers in the south than in the north (for whatever evil appendages may uniformly attach to Roman Catholic populations, they are not invariably *mad*,

and it is not invariably unsafe for Protestants to live amongst them). No! The reason is, that in the south, there is more encroachment on religious liberty than there is in the north, the proportion of objectors to the forced system being greater in the south than in the north. If the *cause* of Ireland's excitement were Roman Catholicism, the excitement would exist even if there were no Established Church. But does any one believe that if the Catholics of the south were exempted from legal obligation to support Protestantism, that Protestant teachers and Protestant gentlemen would be less at ease there, and more in danger from popular attacks than the same persons are in the north, or in England? If the Negroes had not been *slaves*, would the Whites have been in peril? Let St. Domingo answer, or let the present state of our own colonies reply.

Most of the politicians who do not or who will not see the *real* cause, trace all the evils of anarchy, poverty, and absenteeism, that afflict unhappy Ireland, to one of the two things mentioned—the *character* or the *religion* of the people; but what has been observed may suffice to show that the ills of Ireland are and have been chiefly those of *misgovernment*. There is and there has been a disregard of *equity*. Let the Protestant Church Establishment cease to be, and Ireland will revive: Roman Catholicism will be met on equal ground, and whatever is truth will conquer. But let the Act which announces that its days are numbered, be unsullied by invasion of actual rights. “In all muta-

tions," says Mr. Burke, "if mutations must be, the circumstance which will serve most to blunt the edge of their mischief, and to promote what good may be in them, is, that they should find us with our minds tenacious of justice, and tender of property." So, in proportion as those who aim at the discontinuance of the Irish Church Establishment, discover a sensibility to what is just, the alarm and hostility of their opponents will be allayed. The supposed "*mischief*" will, with good reason, appear the less; the alleged "*good*" the more possible. From all confiscators let honest men stand aloof! "I hope," says Burke, "we shall never be so totally lost to all sense of the duties imposed upon us by the law of social union, as, upon any pretext of public service, to confiscate the goods of a single unoffending citizen." And, as for the amount of emolument enjoyed, he says, and incontrovertibly, "when once the commonwealth has established the estates of the church as property, it can, consistently, hear nothing of the more or the less. Too much and too little are treason against property."

It wants but a sagacious and bold prime minister to say to the stipendiaries of the Irish church—"My lords and gentlemen, the Church Establishment in Ireland is over; but you shall suffer no wrong. The state which, in its wisdom and right authority, decrees that your functions shall cease, in its justice provides that all pecuniary engagements with you shall be rigidly fulfilled. Without liability to abatements, therefore, your incomes henceforth are secure. If, in future, you

preach the gospel, it is not of constraint, but of free-will.' Let but a prime minister of England say this, and let principalities and powers denounce and rage as it may please them, let the existence of adequate resources for the scheme, without burdening the empire, be denied, the united people will uphold him—the people that, through its representatives, consented to pay twenty millions to the planters—the people, looking forward to the reduction of the military and police force that now vex and demoralize Ireland, will ratify the engagement and see it fulfilled, and Ireland will be, what it is not now, *accessible* to light and truth. But if the government determine to medicate whether the patient will or nill, and in order to lessen her power of resistance, shall propose to gag, or paralyze her advocates, by making them pensioners on its bounty; in a word, if the government, the government that legislatively affirms Roman Catholicism to be error, propose to pay the Catholic priesthood out of the public purse,—let the people denounce a scheme so monstrous, so inconsistent, so self-condemning. Let them say, Roman Catholics and Protestants alike—let them say that, while resolved that conscience shall be free, the *just* work shall be indebted only to *honourable* means, nor truth be compromised to uphold its semblance.

The writer cannot but be aware with what scorn by some, and with what anger by others, his proposition to annul the Protestant Establishment in Ireland will be received. But if the parties who

will be thus indignant and angry knew how careful he is to discriminate between them and their system, how anxious to avoid any breach of Christian charity—how ready to do honour to *all* excellence wherever found, they would not only forgive, but justify, his *expression* of an opinion, that, right or wrong, they would then see could have been uttered only in obedience to a stern conviction both of its truth and importance. If those parties can subdue their emotions so far as their own pretensions to reason and truth demand, if, in fine, they will be *candid*, they will see that nothing has been proposed that men of honour and religion should refuse. Transfer the question, and let it be, shall England, numbering seven Protestants, or more, to one Catholic, be forcibly charged with the support of a Catholic hierarchy? Every Protestant is revolted. But, if justly, why? Is it because Roman Catholicism is error? Then the same sort of moral shock must be experienced by the people of Ireland, since, in their apprehension, *Protestantism* is error. But, it is argued, in reply to this, they mistake, it is *not* so, and therefore may be *lawfully* imposed upon them. Then cease, henceforth, all declamations against the doctrine of infallibility! For if Protestants *only* may claim public support for their religion, it is not the assumption of *infallibility* that is wrong, but its assumption by any save Protestants. But are English Protestants justly revolted at the idea of a Roman Catholic hierarchy being forcibly upheld amongst them, its adherents being only as one to

eight? Must not Ireland, then, be the same? Yes; the same, that is, *justly* revolted! Then what remains, but to decree *justice*, to relieve Ireland from her burden, and, by equitable laws, securing to all equal and perfect religious freedom, and full protection in well-doing, to give her the peace for which she sighs, and which it is *now* only a cruel mockery of her state to say, she has no taste to enjoy.

Some zealous Protestants will say, is this faithfulness to the God of truth, to withdraw His standard from the field and abandon it to His foes? The question may be met by another, *Is it* doing so? Besides such an inquiry is a return to the argument already disposed of. If *justice* require that a Protestant Church establishment shall no longer be forced upon Ireland, to withdraw it is a duty to be done *at all events*; it is *to obey* the God of truth. And is *He* not to be trusted? Are His dictates to be slighted because their consistency with human notions of expediency and the requirements of His cause is not perceived? But to the point. Will the clergy, secured in their incomes, the friends of religion every where free and unembarrassed in their movements, cease to feel any interest in Ireland's spiritual welfare? Will not every clergyman, able and willing to preach, be at liberty to do so, and be open to invitation, to that end, from any who would ask him? Will the noblemen and gentlemen who now so largely and generously sacrifice of their personal property, and so liberally act upon the voluntary principle in fur-

therance of divine truth, be inactive when all will depend upon free-will offering and spontaneous exertion? How unphilosophical! How libellous the thought!

But more; consider some facts. Ever since the Protestant church has existed in Ireland, that country has been the seat of *religious* feud, created by jealousy and a sense of injury. No doubt she has had numberless *civil* grounds of just complaint against her governors, but that there would have yet remained a fruitful source of irritation, in her Protestant establishment, had all these been disposed of, a brief survey of her history will prove; and proving this, it is made evident, that the expectation of seeing her contented and prosperous would, at any time, have been unreasonable. *It must therefore be so still, and continue to be so, while the cause is unremoved.* To begin at the Reformation—what is the testimony of Hume? “The example of the English alone was sufficient to render the Reformation odious to the prejudiced and discontented Irish. The old opposition of manners, laws, and interest, was *now* inflamed by *religious* antipathy, and the cultivating and civilizing of that country seemed to become every day more difficult and impracticable.” Can any person, professing to judge candidly, doubt that the Reformation was rendered pre-eminently odious by the *compulsory* measures used for its advancement? *This* it was that exacerbated the all-ready excited fury of the oppressed Irish, and deferred the hope of their civilization. *This* it was, undoubtedly, that

led to the slaughter at Athenry, and accelerated and strengthened the rebellion of Tyrone, who sustained himself and his cause, by professing to be “the champion of the Catholic religion;” and well he might, since Attorney-general Coke afterwards stigmatized the conditions of peace that Tyrone had proposed as “odious and abominable,” one of them being, as Coke described it, “a public toleration of an idolatrous religion.” *This* it was that cherished their animosity against Protestants, and laid them open to foreign solicitation. Was it not *this* that suggested to the Spanish general, D’Aquila, when he invaded Ireland, the policy of assuming the title of “General in the holy war, for the preservation of the faith in Ireland?” With what plea could he have assumed such a title, if a hostile faith had not been *forced* upon that country? “He endeavoured,” says Hume, “to persuade the people, that Elizabeth was, by several bulls of the Pope, deprived of her crown; that her subjects were absolved from their oaths of allegiance; and that the Spaniards were come to deliver the Irish from the dominion of the devil.” Thus was rebellion inflamed, and no doubt justified in the minds of the Irish, by the *necessity*, that would appear to them, of opposing force to force for the maintenance of the religion they preferred. The *necessity* would have had no semblance of existence, if Protestantism had not been established *by power* and sustained *against will*. Again, when the impeachment and death of Strafford had led the Irish to revolve many severities, of which his

general good government had prevented from producing the legitimate effects, their old animosities were rekindled, and, says the historian, “ their interests, both with regard to property and *religion*, secretly stimulated them to revolt.” Then came the conspiracy of Roger Moore, in 1641 ; and one of his pleas was, that the English had “ suppressed their religion and bereaved them of their liberties.” He engaged the heads of the native Irish into a conspiracy, by portraying the dangers in prospect from the bigotry of the English Parliament. “ News which every day arrived from England, of the fury expressed by the Commons against all Papists, struck fresh terror into the Irish nation, and both stimulated the conspirators to execute their fatal purpose, and gave them assured hopes of the concurrence of all their countrymen.” Then were executed barbarities, such as the world scarce ever heard of before or since ; and, “ amidst all these enormities, the sacred name of RELIGION resounded on every side. Nature, which in that rude people, was sufficiently inclined to atrocious deeds, was further stimulated by precepts and national prejudices, impoisoned by those aversions, *more deadly and incurable*, which arose from an *enraged* superstition.” From 150,000 to 200,000, as all know, perished. Then what was the policy that the English Parliament adopted ? “ By continuing their violent persecutions, and still more violent menaces against priests and Papists, they confirmed the Irish Catholics in their rebellion, and cut off all hopes of indulgence and toleration.” A short

and delusive peace was concluded. The Irish being driven to desperation by the intolerant measures of the English Parliament, the rebellion broke out afresh. Then came the frightful severities of Cromwell, defended on the plea of retaliation. So much for attempting to *compel* their support of a religion they disapproved.

Still, as we advance, the principle is illustrated that Ireland has been made, through her legislators, the victim of religious feud. In the reign of James II. Protestants became the objects of state persecution, and the Roman Catholics were unduly, because *unequally*, regarded; but the course was justified by Protestant example. From the accession of William, thenceforward to the last rebellion, and till now, we find the same illustration of injustice and its consequences; the Protestants, only, being the favourites—White Boys, Orange Boys, Peep-o'-day Boys, Defenders—whence these parties, but from the prolific germ of the Protestant *Establishment*—the determination to maintain by force, *not* Protestant *equality*, but Protestant *ascendancy*? In all the fluctuations of power the *same* principle appears. In the day of Roman Catholic weakness, there have sprung from this particular cause sullen murmurings and brooding discontent: in the season of its advantage, more or less, persecutions, assassinations, abductions, incendiarism, insurrection. Far be it from the present writer to extenuate the crimes referred to! He would only insist upon it that they are to be accounted for without concluding the Irish to be other than

ordinary human beings. The facts adduced point to the Protestant Establishment as the exciting, however undesigning, cause. Now, if the cause of animosity and discord should cease, will the civil law be less powerful to protect philanthropists than it is now, and will they be benumbed by the genial influence of a more widely spread freedom to do well? When the Protestant teacher shall cease to be regarded as a mercenary and a pensioner upon the unwilling and the poor, when he shall walk abroad, nothing owing him from any but good will, and *that* due to him from all—when he imparts only benefits, and takes only what is freely offered in return,—is it likely that malice and bloodshed will scare his path, and that his teachings will be less fruitful of advantage than they are now? Will there be fewer persons to preach the gospel when perils are diminished, and less anxiety amongst the religious Irish, high and low, to engage their services, when the promise of result has become less doubtful? Does the church, surpassing the zeal of its prototype, not merely increase by the blood of its martyrs, but is martyrdom its *incentive* to labour? Does it *invite* the bloody crown? If not, what is there to lose, what is there to fear? rather, what is there not to hope for Truth from a fair field?

Again, consider that Roman Catholicism is rapidly increasing in Ireland; that that which the establishment existed only to advance—Protestantism—has retrograded. Irish statistics will show that if considerable inroads have been made upon the prevailing religion anywhere, they have been

effected by agency independent of the state. Will the diligent, and, no doubt, most sincere, voluntary friends of the Protestant cause in Ireland, noble and otherwise, dispute this? What harm, then, can result from withdrawing an establishment that, as a whole, notwithstanding its very excellent clergy, has, (unintentionally, be it freely admitted,) but not, on that account, the less really and universally, done worse than nothing *in the matter referred to*? What harm can result from withdrawing it, and, by so doing, giving greater facilities to that species of agency which has indisputably and beneficially done something? Consider, lastly, that the withdrawment of the *Protestant* Establishment is the only security against the establishment of its rival. Alarmists denounce the spread of liberalism, perhaps, in some views, not without reason. For, should it ever happen that the government become indifferent to religion, and take upon itself to affirm, at least practically, that one creed is as good as another, it will make no scruple to adopt the principle of “Jehovah, Jove, or Lord,” politicians, in establishing the religion which is that of the majority, *because it is such*, and the Roman Catholic, in such a case, may supersede the Protestant. This is so possible, nay, the flagitious proposal to pay the Roman Catholic priests out of the public purse, renders it so probable, that the only security against it is to decree that there shall be no established religion at all, but that all religious teachers shall be fully and alike protected, and equally regarded by the civil law.

But, it is said, if the Roman Catholics should be ascendant *in numbers*, as it regards the whole empire, they will be so *in rule*, in spite of all laws. Admitted—the only question then, is, by what means can their ascendancy be most effectually retarded? The *present* Protestant Establishment in Ireland is clearly inefficient to oppose it *there*, for Roman Catholicism in Ireland is, and has been for a long time, rapidly increasing. Wherever it has given way, it has been before religious *principle*, that is, before effort that would have equally been made had there been no establishment; and wherever the Establishment has reared its banner, it has been without effect amongst Roman Catholics, save that over which Christianity weeps, except, indeed, when its ministers have employed means, to say the least, *not required* by the Canons of their church.

But if, despising all that has been advanced, any should still maintain that there is no proof that the Protestant establishment has *not* retarded the progress of Roman Catholicism in Ireland, so, on the other hand, it may be rejoined there is, at the very least, no proof that it *has*: so that, at any rate, the question lies only between two probabilities. And which is the greater—that the system hated by the Roman Catholics and never coming into contact with them, as a system of instruction, has retarded the spread of Roman Catholicism, or that the voluntary efforts that have been made, and which excited no hostile feeling, and arrayed against their agents no prejudice, have been the barrier?

No candid person can hesitate to reply, that if the evil *has* been retarded, it has *not* been so by the Establishment.

There remain then only three possible ways of preventing the dreaded ascendancy. 1st. By depressing the growing party by legal enactments. 2nd. By so reforming the establishment as to make it more efficient; or, 3rdly. By dissolving it altogether, and thus taking from Catholics a ground of prejudice against Protestantism, and from Protestants the disadvantages with which their present hostile position surrounds them.

The first is manifestly absurd to think of. The second is inexpedient, if it were possible, because, as we have before shown, a Protestant establishment in Ireland at all, is unjust; but if it were otherwise, such a reform of it as would make it more *efficient* is impracticable, since, do what you will in the way of reformation, it would leave all causes for discontent untouched, and all existing barriers to the reception of truth unremoved. *Reduction* might do something, but *Reduction* is not *Reformation*. The third is the only thing at once just, expedient and promising.

But is it said that this would be a precedent for a similar dealing in England? How inconsequent such a remark! Whatever may be thought of the *expediency* of such a measure, would it be endured while the friends of the Establishment are more numerous than the dissenters? *Could* it be delayed after they have ceased to be so? If the *nation* should demand it, it would care for no prece-

dent; if it should not, what would precedent avail? Short sighted men who think that, by giving up the Protestant establishment in Ireland, we should be promoting the power of an intolerant Church, and preparing for our own future bondage! Rather, by refusing to concede this point of justice, are you not setting your seal and sanction to the domination you anticipate? For what is your doctrine, but that power is the proper arbiter of truth? Well may the progress of Roman Catholicism alarm! Protestants, be warned in time, and, as you dread the worst kind of subjugation, pledge yourselves to *justice*. Tell Ireland there shall be *no* established religion there, and you will damp the energies of her popular faith by withdrawing from it the prospect of *constitutional* dominion.

But some perhaps will return to the cry of “reform,” and say, had *this* been proposed instead of “dissolution,” we should have joined in it. But what imaginable reform would avail? If, for instance, it should be proposed to exempt those districts from ecclesiastical burdens where there is not above a certain number of Protestants; the affixing relief to a minimum of Protestants would only operate as a premium to Roman Catholic zeal, and set ingenuity to work to bring about the required condition. It would incite, because it would promise to reward, the spirit of persecution;—“make the residence of Protestants intolerable, and we shall have our end.”—Truly enviable state of the luckless few who should be regarded as the instruments of injustice, and the obstacles to liberty! Such a re-

form as would pacify Ireland is *impracticable*, and the only security, or chance for the maintenance of Protestant liberty, is to leave Protestants to their own resources as members in common of the body politic, and, as such, *fully*, but, as such, *only* eligible to the common benefits and protection assured to all alike by a just administration of equal laws.

With the conviction, then, that the *source* of Ireland's troubles is its Protestant establishment, and that this Establishment is incapable of being accommodated to purposes, upon the whole, more useful than injurious to her people, and also that Protestantism has no chance of being able to withstand the force of error, while that cumbrous Establishment, like Saul's armour on David, restricts its energies; in a word, with the conviction that justice must be outraged, and the dearest interests, social and moral, sacrificed, unless that Establishment be withdrawn, has the writer affirmed too much when he asserted that the united people would support any minister who should propose the measure he suggests? Do the people delight in injustice for its own sake, or can they not discern what it is? But, to the Protestant people *of England*,—his appeal is to *you*—you who are proverbially quick to discern, and alike prompt and steady in acting upon, the claims of plain truth and common sense! Would *you* writhe under the compulsion to maintain a Roman Catholic hierarchy, yourselves constituting the larger body? Then what can be more plain? You are *bound* to favour, through your representatives, the relief of the Roman Catholics of

Ireland from an oppression you condemn. Protestants of Ireland ! will you resist the measure ? And, if so, upon what ground ?—of justice ? Then it is your duty to vindicate your consistency by proving that your resistance is *just*. Will you resist it upon the score of expediency, and trample upon justice ? Then prove, at least to yourselves, that the imagined expediency is not an idle dream. If you *cannot* resist it justly, or politically, act like men, and commit yourselves to the resources of a manhood that is never so much itself as when sustained by *right*, and to the protection of a Providence that creates no duty that will not benefit its observers in discharging.

Protestant Dissenters of Ireland ! It is scarcely necessary to observe that *you* are pledged by your principles, and encouraged by your *experience*, not only to refrain from opposing the measure, but to give it all the furtherance it is capable of receiving from the most energetic application and exercise of your moral weight and influence in society, to this end ; and, as for you, Protestant Dissenters of England ! to address to you any arguments on this subject, were to offer an insult by impeaching your consistency, and questioning your interest in the weal of Ireland.

Roman Catholics ! if your pledges are not worthless—worthless as your enemies say they are—if the smallest sense of justice inspire you, or gratitude, or generosity warm you—if you are not as mean, and base, and despicable as slander feigns

they are whom she most hates, Protestants will have nothing to apprehend from *you*, and will experience nothing but the goodwill of acknowledged and equal brethren. Cease from lending yourselves to schemes that are as visionary as they are factious, and combine all your energies to bring about the withdrawment from your burdened country of the Protestant establishment. Party men and furious men will denounce you ; good men may deem you erroneous, but none will be able to deny with truth, that your demand is constitutional. You will have the sympathies of all who are *both* just and enlightened, and your triumph cannot be long delayed ; while, in gaining it, you will secure amicably, more than Repeal can even promise, and hold firmly the blessing which, if Repeal gave you for one day it could not ensure to you the next, and could give you, at any rate, only at the sacrifice of good-fellowship with England, where, after all, are your truest and best friends.

Electors ! one and all—This is the object to be aimed at, that you should press upon your representatives, and that should influence your choice of them, so far as you think of the welfare of Ireland. It is the Protestant establishment there, that, by assuming a superiority which Roman Catholicism denies, and by forcing contributions which Roman Catholics deem ill-bestowed, and thus exciting a spirit of indignation and hostility it were unnatural not to feel, that “lets slip the dogs of war,” and is the occasion of flight to the peaceful who are rich,

and of horrid privations and growing discontent and ill-blood amongst the poor. It is this that is the primary cause of the Irish peasant's encroachment upon the English labourer. It is this that gives faction strength and folly speciousness. It is this, by the ill it works, and the despair it generates, that more than excuses extravagant propositions and rescues their authors from unmingled suspicion of corrupt motive. Every virtue and every right dictate of nature urges you to demand, through your representatives, the withdrawment of the Protestant Establishment from Ireland. Till this be done, Ireland must be irritated and corrupted by soldiery, and England burdened to maintain a force that proclaims its injustice. Till THIS be done, *whatever else* may be done, darkness will cover the land ; but, *being done*, remember the consequent light will reveal an ineffaceable stain, if, in the doing of it, there shall have been contracted the infamy of the slightest spoliation.

It may be the writer has failed to produce the conviction he desires to establish. Be it so ! In *a multitude of minds* it wants not implanting : it is there already, and is working to its end. He will, at least, indulge the hope that, as the advocate of order and of *honour*, he may not have written all in vain. It will be something gained to the cause of virtue, if he have, in *any* instance, called the rash to reason, and *so far* prepared for the honourable adjustment of an event that no human power can *very* long avert—and more—an event

that, *when* it comes, may come with a violence proportioned to the pertinacity with which it is attempted to be postponed.

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